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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9384
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RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUYNAAAC/COMNAVFORJAPAN YOKOSUKA JA PRIORITY
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY
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RUHBANB/OKINAWA FLD OFC US FORCES JAPAN CP BUTLER JA PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/USFJ PRIORITY
INFO RUEHFK/AMCONSUL FUKUOKA 1394
RUEHOK/AMCONSUL OSAKA KOBE 5185
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RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 2650
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SUBJECT: TOKYO MEDIA REACTION - NORTH KOREA

¶1. LEAD STORIES: Top stories on Friday morning included a decision on Thursday by the ruling coalition not to specify when to raise the consumption tax in its tax system reform outline for fiscal 2009.

¶2. "North Korea's Offensive Attitude Should Not Be Allowed" The moderate Yomiuri editorialized (12/12): "...The six-party talks, which were held for the first time in five months, ended without producing a document stipulating details concerning the verification of North Korea's nuclear programs. This lack of progress was unavoidable given North Korea's lack of interest in accepting verification. It is important for the six-party process not to allow North Korea to make any excuses by putting a clear and strict verification framework into writing. We should not make an easy compromise in order to reach a hasty agreement.... The U.S. should reformulate its strategy toward North Korea under the Obama administration and negotiate with Pyongyang in a firm manner.... The U.S. may have tried to move the six-party process forward by delisting North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism, but Pyongyang duped Washington by refusing to agree to verification. We have to say that the U.S. was too naive in its talks with North Korea."

SCHIEFFER